

The PROPHE'T'S *Death*
Lamented and Improved,
IN A
SERMON

Preached *Septem. 1. 1723.* to the *North*
Church in *Boston*, on the *Lords Day*
after the *Funeral* of their *Venerable*
and *Aged Pastor*,

Increase Mather, D.D.

And now Publish'd at the Desire of
Many in the *Audience*.

By *Benjamin Colman.*

Matth. 11. 9. *But what went ye out for to see? A Prophet?*

—10. 41. *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward.*

B O S T O N:

Printed by *T. Fleet*, for *Nath. Belknap*, at
his Shop near *Scarlet's Wharfe*, 1723.

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March. 11. 9. But what went ye out for to
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The Prophet's DEATH

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Isai. III. 1, 2.

For behold, the Lord, the LORD of Hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, —the Prophet, and the Prudent, and the Ancient.

THIS day is *this Scripture* fulfilled among You, in the death of your Venerable and Aged Pastor, who was a Prophet, and the Prudent, and the Ancient: And behold! the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, has taken Him away from You; and not from You only who were his particular Flock and Care, but from this His People, and these his Churches; from this City and from this Land, which in respect of the Lord's Spiritual presence in them, the purity of his Institutions, and the zeal of his Worshipers, have sometimes been unto Him as his *Jerusalem* and *Judah* once were.

A Prophet is no small Name in the *Israel* of God and in his Book. Among the Prophets some are distinguish'd by excelling *Prudence* and wisdom; and

and some by *Age*, who have been long growing in sacred knowledge and in grace and holiness.

NOW when such die my *Text* calls upon us to *behold*, to consider attentively, to lay to heart and improve aright the awful Providence and Judgment of a Sovereign God: For *behold, the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, He takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the Prophet, the prudent and the ancient.*

WHERE should we look for the *Prophets* of the Lord but in *Judah* and *Jerusalem*? There God rais'd 'em up, for there was his visible Church and Kingdom. There then you must look for the *Prophets* deaths and graves, and for those that will lay their decease to heart.

INDEED my *Text* speaks of the Removal of *Others* by death besides the Prophet, and those Eminent and Useful persons like the Prophet Himself; *the Mighty man, and the Man of war, and the Judge; the Honourable Man and the Counsellor, the cunning Artificer and the Eloquent Orator.* These also, and such-like, are the Honour of the places wherein they live, and publick Blessings to their Country, in their respective Orders, and by their respective Faculties, and services to the Publick. When such are taken away 'tis a common loss to City and Country, being no small part of the *stay and staff* to both; whether to *lead* a Province in its Infancy, or for it to *lean* upon in its Age.

THE favour of God and his blessing is *the whole stay and staff* of a people; if they lose that they necessarily sink and fall. But there are many *Staffs* which the public Weal of a People leans on under the Care of the Divine Providence, the which if God breaks it unavoidably falls; as a *Building* needs

needs must when the *Pillars* on which it stands are broken down. *For the Pillars of the Earth are the Lords, and he has set the world upon them:* And his Eminent Ministers (like *Cephas*, and *James* and *John*) he sets as strong and beautiful *Pillars* in his Church; and tho' he is often taking them down and removing them, yet he sets up others in their places; and so his Church yet stands and shall continue, tho' its Ministers cannot by reason of death; *being built upon the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the Foundation, and the chief Corner Stone.*

BUT let us again look over my Text, and observe how strongly it intimates the Awfulness of the Providence and Judgment, when *the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah*, these excellent and useful persons, and among them the *Prophet, the prudent and the ancient.* The *Prophets* do not live for ever: And we see that *Wise men die:* And your *Fathers* (the *Ancients*) where are they?

YOU may be ready to say, Why, they liv'd to a great and good old age, and have done a great deal of *service* in their days, and at last were under great *decays*, and wholly taken off from their work, and it was time for 'em to die and be at rest. But says my Text, *Behold*, there is the hand and anger of *the Lord*, even the *Lord of Hosts*, in the decease of these *Ancients*, after their long life of services to his Church and People.

Observe 1. HE that takes away the prudent, the ancient and the Prophet, is *the Lord, the Lord of Hosts.* How great, how fearful and glorious is this

this Name of God! The true God must be the Lord of all Hosts. The *style* imports glorious Majesty, absolute Power, supream and universal Empire. The Myriads of *Angels*, the Armies of Heaven, *Michael* and his Legions, are subject to Him, arm'd by him, and fight in his Cause. The Stars also in their Courses, that visible Host of Heaven. In our low Regions, the fire and the hail, the snow and vapour, and the stormy wind fulfil his word. Who ever enter'd into these stores and treasures, this Armoury of God, which He has prepar'd against the day of war and battle? We the Inhabitants of this Earth are reputed as nothing before Him; yet with us too there are the mighty Events of *Wars and Battels* among the Nations, over which the Lord of Hosts does in a special manner preside. He guards and defends his Church, and makes the Stars as well as his Angels to fight for it; and all its Enemies, visible and invisible, are under his feet. Or when He pleases himself to fight against his sinful and provoking people, and to punish them, he sends his *pestilence* that walks in darkness, or he makes *Men* his rod and sword, or he arms the weakest Creatures, *worms flies and Caterpillars*, and they are his great Hosts, to invade and devour the earth.— In these things God is seen to be the Lord God of Hosts; and by this great and terrible Name he was known in *Judab*, his Name was Great in *Israel*, there brake he the Arrows of the Bow, the Shield, the sword and the battel. Ps. 76. 1, 2. And there he also gave over his people unto the Sword, when he was wroth with his Inheritance, and their Priests fell by it. Ps. 78. 64. And we with his *Israel* of old, came into this Adoration of him;

Him; *Isai. 47. 4. As for our Redeemer the Lord of Hosts is his Name, the Holy One of Israel.* Thus He that takes away the Prophet, the prudent and the ancient, is the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, and as such he does it, in his Sovereignty and Supream Dominion.

2. FOR this reason my *Text* demands of us the most reverend *Attention* to this Providence, the most serious *Consideration* of it, a most profound *Submission* to it, and a most religious *Improvement* of it. For behold the Lord of Hosts does this to his people: This he does as the God of the spirits of all flesh, in his Divine Sovereignty and absolute power; And who shall say to him what doest Thou? He does it in his holy and righteous Anger, and let all flesh be silent before him, and fall down and worship. It is the LORD let him do what seemeth him good: It is the Lord, and good is his Word. It belongs to us religiously to regard the Operations of his Hand. He judges his Judah and his Jerusalem, and takes away from them the stay and the staff; takes away the Prophets whom he first gave. This does the Holy One of Israel and his Maker; who has made the Earth and created Man upon it, whose hands have stretched out the Heavens, and all their Hosts has he commanded. *Isai. 45. 12.*

THE words present us with two Observations; a more General and a more particular one.

1. THAT when the Sovereign God removes by death from a place or people Excellent and Useful Persons, it is a very awful thing in his righteous and governing Providence, which they should attentively consider, and seriously lay to heart.

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2. That

2. THAT in a particular manner God expects this of his People when he takes away from them his Holy Prophets and faithful Ministers.

I. D. THAT when the Sovereign God takes away excellent and useful Persons by Death from a People, it is a very awful thing in his righteous and governing Providence, which they should attentively consider and seriously lay to heart.

THE Great God sends the Summons of Death whither and unto whom, and when and as it pleases him. He sends it to the Wise and Good, the Ancient and Honourable, and for the Heads of a People as well as others. Aaron has notice given him to go up and die, and so has Moses. Hezekiah is bid to set his House in order, for he must die and not live. — The infinite God has both the power and the right to do this. The highest and best of men are but the Work of his hands, and the Gifts of his Providence to the world, and unto the places wherein they live. God made them what they are or have been, He gifted and endowed, inclined and spirited, assisted and prospered them; to make 'em the publick Servants of their Country; its Patriots, Ornaments and Benefactors.

SO He sent Moses his Servant and Aaron whom he had chosen. Ps. 105. 26. Men Illustrious in sacred writ, famous in their Generations, Fathers in Israel, and Venerable in the Church for ever. Men singular for Grace and Piety, Gifts and Services. Moses the Chief Ruler and Aaron the High priest of God!

God! *Moses* the Prophet and *Aaron* the Saint of the Lord! *Moses* his Brothers shield, and *Aaron* the Holder-up of his Lords hands. God call'd and qualify'd 'em, us'd and honour'd them, in all the Good they did to *Israel* his people, in all the signs and wonders which he sent them to do before them.

BUT he lent them to his *Israel* only for a time. *Moses* is dead, and the Prophets are dead. When the Lord takes them away, he takes but his own. He never meant them to live here for ever; of Whom the World is not worthy. The Church must resign them with a grateful Acknowledgement of the Divine Bounty and Grace, which gave them at all and spar'd them so long.

THE Providence of God is in a special manner concerned and to be observed, in ordering the lives and deaths of such Men. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints. The Lord knows the days of the Upright. He numbers 'em with a particular eye to his Glory from them, and the Good of Mankind.

THE Providence of God is awful to a place when they die. The Lord's Voice cries to the City in their Decease. He takes away its honour and beauty, its safety and defence, its Strength and Ornament. God accuses his people, and charges it upon them as Contempt of Him and his Judgments, when the Righteous perish and no man lays it to heart. *Isa.* 57. 1. They are no common Deaths, but are to be lamented as a publick and common loss. We pour contempt on God's choicest favours to us, if we can easily and carelessly part with them.

WE should awfully bethink our selves,— Have not our Sins *forfeited* and lost them? have we not *provoked* a gracious God to deprive us of 'em? Is there not much of his holy *Displeasure* in the Bereavement?— It may be they were not eno^r *esteemed*, valu'd and improved by us, while we had them with us: It may be they were sometimes *disesteem'd*, disparaged, and evil-intreated by us.— And may they not be *taken away from the evil to come*? What Judgments may be breaking in, now that God is removing them that used by their Prayers and Intercessions to *stand in the gap*? As He said that he would destroy them had not Moses his *Chosen* stood before him in the breach, to turn away his anger from them. Ps. 106. 23.— And who shall *fill up* their place? Are there *many* rising up to do it? how many, or how *few*, remaining in the good Spirit of the *Deceased*!— Or, what if Death should return and *take away the rest*?— What is the *Warning* of God to us, what the particular and *instant Duty* which he calls us to, by such a Providence? What Humiliation and repentance, what fear and apprehension, lest he *quench the light of Israel*, and *remove our Candlestick* out of its place!

THUS awful should the Providence of God be to us, and thus ought we to have our hearts affected and exercised, when He is removing *excellent and useful Persons* from us by the Stroke of Death.

OUR Duty is, in the first place, (as the Prophet teaches us in the words preceeding my text) to *Cease from Man, whose breath is in his Nostrils, and wherein is he to be accounted of*? Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of man in whom there

is no help; his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his dust. God may justly break the *Creature* which we make our *stay* and *staff*, and cast that to the worms which we make our Confidence and trust; make our *Idol*.

WE must give *glory* and *thanks* to God for his *Gifts to men*; thanks to our *Ascended Saviour*, who has received and given them. *Eph. 4. 8.* Let us give God the *glory* of all that is *good* in man; for what have they, or were they, but what He made them; and what they received from Him?

LET us *look up* to GOD, the Father of lights, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, and *ask it* for our selves and for our Children. He must repair the Breach, and raise up others in the place of those that are gone from us.

LET us endeavour to *fill well* our own places, and be emulous to *excel* in them. Let the worthy lives of others fire us with a holy Ambition to be as they have been. So when *Moses* was dead, God said to *Joshua*, *Arise thou*: Take and fill his place, go on where he left. And,

LET us *train up* our Children in the steps of the Faith of our Fathers, that when we are dead our selves, they may rise up (by the will of God) in the Spirit of their *pious Ancestors*; and be accounted to God for a Generation; a Godly Seed to seek and serve him.

THESE are some of the *Lessons* which God would teach us by the death of Persons distinguish'd by piety, wisdom, usefulness among us; and we must hold our selves called by Providence to learn them.

BUT

BUT it is the Excellent PROPHET's Death, that I am at this time call'd more particularly to consider of; and it is time therefore that I come to the second *Proposition* or Doctrine, which is,

2. D. THAT the sovereign and righteous God, does in a particular manner expect that his Church and People will attentively observe, lay to heart and improve the afflictive Dispensation of his Providence to them, in the death of his Holy PROPHETS and faithful MINISTERS.—

GOD has from the beginning favour'd and bless'd his Church with Prophets and Ministers of Religion: And the Death of such has ever been esteemed such an afflictive Dispensation of Providence, as his people should be much affected with, lay to heart, and make a religious Improvement of.

1. GOD has from the beginning favour'd and bless'd his Church with Prophets and Ministers of Religion; whom he has raised up among his people, and sent unto them from time to time. Every Prophet is a Minister of Religion, a Minister of Christ; but in the proper and strict use of the word, of a Superior Order. Not every Minister of Religion may take the Honour to be call'd a Prophet. Yet in a lax and improper sense, the word Prophet may sometimes stand for all the Ministers of Religion. And the Priests of the Lord being left unmentioned in my text, it may invite us into the widest Use or sense of the Word; even to take in the whole Ministerial Order.

IN a strict Sense, Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 21. And so Prophecy was, That discovery of things secret, and prediction of things future, which it has pleased God to make unto his Church, by a particular Revelation of his Mind and Will, unto his Servants, at one time and another. Or to borrow another Definition of Prophecy; "Prophetic Prediction is a declaration of the Divine Prescience, looking at any distance thro' a Train of infinite Causes, known and unknown to us, upon a sure and certain Effect.

THUS a Prophet was an extraordinary Messenger and Inspired Man of God, favour'd with Visions and Revelations; a revealer of secrets and a Predictor of futurities; in which respect he was called a Seer, and was ordinarily sent with particular Messages of Gods favour or anger to Places or Persons; and was sometimes arm'd with a Miraculous power to do signs and mighty works, to evince his Mission from God. Whether it were by some Vision, or by a Divine Suggestion to and Impression on the Mind, awake or in sleep; or by a Voice to the Ear; if a Message from God were put into a Person's mouth, a thing secret revealed to him to deliver, or a thing future to foretel; these things made a Prophet, whether he wro't Miracles or no; which yet were things frequent with the Prophets.— Moses, Elijah and Elisha wro't most Miracles among the Prophets: Ezekiel, Daniel and Zecharias most abounded in Visions: Isaiab, Jeremiah, Haggai and others were imploy'd in particular Messages: But as for the
Reve-

Revelation of things secret and future, that was common to them all.

BUT then in a lax and improper Sense, the Ordinary Teachers in the Church of Christ may be called *Prophets*; and our *Preaching* may be called *Prophefying*. For the Prophets of old were us'd to preach, but they did not always prophesie when they preached.

NOAH was a Prophet and a Preacher of Righteousness: Moses was eminently both a Prophet and a Preacher to Israel. And it seems very probable, that the Prophets of Israel were wont to preach unto the People on their New-moons and Sabbaths. 2 K. 4. 23. Aaron was a good Speaker and was therefore called a Prophet unto Moses. Ex. 7. 1. A Divine Lesson is call'd a Prophecy; even a good Mothers Instruction to her Son; Prov. 31. 1. The Prophecy which his Mother taught him. The Apostle seems to speak of Ordinary preaching under the Name of prophefying; 1 Cor. 14. 3. He that prophefieth speaketh unto Men for Edification, and Exhortation and Comfort. He that preaches aright does all this. The Prophets in the Christian Church are therefore directed to observe order in their speaking one after another: Ye may all prophesie one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted.

THUS Prophefying is sometimes taken in a lax sense, whereof I have said eno' (it may be) to excuse me to you if I treat my Text in the most extensive sense, for the whole sacred Ministerial Order.

2. THE Death of such Men of God has ever been esteemed in the Church a very afflictive Dispensation of Providence; such as the people of God should be much affected

affected with, should lay greatly to heart, and make a religious Improvement of.

THE Prophets die as well as others. They rest from their Labours, (go from the place of the Holy) and their works follow them. They go to receive a Prophets reward and crown. Jo. 8. 53. Abraham is dead, and the Prophets are dead. And their deaths have been much laid to heart by the People of God in their several Generations.

JACOB was a Prophet, and the Church of God was in his house, and when he expir'd (after the propheticall Blessing of his Sons upon his Death-bed) how did Joseph weep upon his face and kiss it? Was it as a Father, or as a Prophet, that he wept thus over him? doubtless both. And when they brought his Body to the floor at Atad, then they mourn'd with a great and sore lamentation for seven days; so that the Inhabitants of the Land noted it, as a very grievous mourning to the Egyptians. No; It was the grievous mourning of Israelites at a Prophet's Grave, and of Sons at a most pious aged Fathers Tomb.

BUT if this may be tho't too much an Instance of natural affection and filial piety, let us go on to the mourning of Israel at the death of Moses and Aaron. They were Brethren and Prophets, for the Lord spake by them both. Exod. 4. 15. I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth. He sent them together to Israel and to Pharaoh. Aaron died first, and the Congregation mourned for him 30 days, even all the House of Israel. Num. 20. ult. Moses was the Greater Prophet: Him God took up with him into the Mount for forty days together, while Aaron was left below. This Servant of God died

on Mount Nebo, and the Angels of God buried him, and the Church *wept for him also thirty days in the plains of Moab.*

INDEED it is not *recorded* of every Prophet of the Lord, that he was solemnly mourn'd over at his decease. But it is to be *supposed* often where it is not said. Tho' we must allow too for some very *wicked times* wherein the Righteous perished and no man laid it to heart. Yea sometimes they *shed the blood* of the Prophets; but then the *Faithful* went into the deeper mourning.

THE Prophet Samuel, tho' he lay by neglected a long while before his death, yet when he died *all Israel were gathered together and lamented him.* And Saul when it was too late, he also mourn'd his death: He sought in his Sorrows to bring him up from the dead, and was ready to worship his supposed shade.

ELIJAH never saw death like his Brethren; but tho' the *Sons of the Prophets* could not mourn him as dying, yet how sad (for themselves) were their *parting looks and words?* knowing that their *Father was to be taken from their heads.*

WHEN Elisha came to his death-bed, after a long and glorious Rest of the Spirit of Prophecy upon him, the King himself came and *wept* over him. A most worthy Action; for truly the *tears of Kings* are worthily shed over the *Graves of the Prophets.*

SO were they again at the death of *Jehojada*, that worthy Priest of the Lord and wise Governor of Judah. He died 130 years old, (the Prophet, the Prudent and the Ancient) and they *buried him among the Kings; for He had done good in Israel,*

Israel, both toward God and toward his house. 2 Chron. 24. 16. There were some of the Kings of Israel that were not allowed this Honour after their death of a Burial in the Sepulchre of the Kings, because they had wrought Evil in Israel. So Abaz, and Manasseh and Amon were denied a Burial among the Kings after their Infamous Reigns. But pious Jehojada, a faithful Prophet and a prudent Regent, they interr'd among the Kings.

UNDER the Gospel John the Baptist was the first Prophet and more than a Prophet. He came in the Spirit of Elias, to prepare the way of the Great Prophet and Teacher; CHRIST, the Lord of the Prophets. But when bloody Herod had slain him, his Disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. Mat. 14. 12. This they doubtless did with much affliction and tears, and Jesus mourn'd with them on so sad an Occasion. Yea He departed into a desert place, to weep in secret for the flagitious deed. The Saviours tears were due to Him, who was the friend of the Bridegroom, and had rejoiced in his Voice. On a much less Occasion our Lord withheld not his tears, even at the Grave of his private pious friend, Lazarus. Jesus wept.

I will name but one more public Servant of Christ, whose Death was decently bewailed; and that was the Martyr Stephen. He was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and did great Wonders and Miracles among the People; and the malicious Enemies of the Truth could not resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. They accus'd him therefore of speaking blasphemous Words against Moses and against GOD. He

made a long and noble Defence for himself, with the face and tongue of an *Angel*, and at last with the flame of a *Seraphim*, which cut them to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. In the Church he had ministred for a small Season as a *Deacon*; but he died more than a *Presbyter* or a *Prophet*; He died equal to the Highest of the *Apostles*; and had he liv'd he must have been an *Apostle of Christ* as well as *Paul*; for had he not seen the Lord *Jesus*? Upon his death the Church went into a universal mourning; *Act. 8. 3.* Devout men carried him to his Grave, and made great Lamentation over him. The death of one so full of Holiness and Wisdom, Zeal and Courage for the Truth, so good a *Disputant* and so fervent a *Preacher*, was much to be lamented. — And thus you see that the People of God have been wont to mourn the Deaths of Gods Holy Prophets and Ministers. God requir'd it of them, and Grace taught them to do so.

AND now (were there need) I should enter in to the Reasons of the thing, Why it ought to be thus, and must needs be so? — It were easie to answer,

1. THAT the Relation which the Administers of Religion stand in to GOD, demands this of us, that we be duly affected with and afflicted at their death. We do but expresse herein our Reverence to the Name of God, who has taken them near to Himself, put a sacred Character upon them, adorn'd 'em with superior Gifts and measures of Grace, and us'd 'em in his more immediate Service. For as a more immediate Relation to Christ, and to the sacred Services in his Church, derives a kind of Relative Holiness upon Persons in the Ministry;

to the love that pious People bear them while they live, and the tears with which they mourn their decease, are a respect paid unto Christ himself; his Name on the Persons, his Spirit in them, his Work committed to them. We do therefore glorify God, and do honour to Religion, while we mourn a Prophet's death. — For what is a Prophet? He is *Nabi*; i.e. *Amicus Dei*; A friend of God. One with whom and to whom God speaks in a familiar manner: who also familiarly converses with God again; and by whom God speaks to others. *Nabi* is a speaker from God and of God unto men. And are we among the Friends of God, if we are not affected at the death of these his Friends? whom he has put into the Ministry, and made them faithful in his house.

THIS Name of *Nabi* was given first to Abraham, that Familiar of Heaven, from whom God would hide nothing. Such in a degree were the chosen Prophets afterward in Israel, and the Name *Nabi* was therefore continued to them. Surely God treated them as friends, to whom and by whom He gave his Revelations; Whom he took into the freest Conversation with Himself, and by whom he spake to others. As our Lord Jesus said to his Disciples, *Job. 15. 15. I have called you friends; for all things whatsoever I have heard from my father, I have made known unto you.*

MOREOVER, The Lords Prophets were Men of God; like Him in his Image and Spirit; much in Communion with him; of much Interest in him and power with him, *Gen 20. 7. He is a Prophet and shall pray for thee.* If then we have any respect to God, we shall lay to heart their death, whom he
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sanctifies to and uses in his more special and immediate Service.

2. THE Relation which the Ministers of Religion stand in to the Souls of men, should so endear and honour them to the people of God, as to fill them with sorrow at their death. The work of Ministers is to watch and work for the Conversion, Edification and Salvation of Souls, as those that must give an Account. They are ordained for men in things pertaining to God. They are God's great Gifts to men, qualified and spirited, sent and used, for the publishing the Will of God to them, for their Spiritual and Everlasting Good. As therefore we love our Souls we should prize the Ministers sent to us from God on this kind design and Errand. *Act, 16, 17. These men are the Servants of God who shew us the way of Salvation. Yea they are your Servants for Jesus sake—* And we will suppose, (what we should desire greatly) that God graciously uses the painful Ministry and Labour of his Servant for the Conversion of many Souls; how dear then must the Person and his Ministry be to them? how valued and desir'd his life? how grievous must it be in that case to part? to see him die who was the Instrument (thro' Grace) of our living to God! to bury him that travell'd in birth for our Souls, till Christ was formed in us? to see those lips clos'd for ever, which have spoken to us the Words of life, and by which it pleased the Spirit of Grace to speak effectually to so many Souls? does not the burial of a Spiritual Father, that has begotten us by the Gospel, call for our dutiful and affectionate tears? To whom owe we most? to the Fathers of our flesh,

or unto these?— Who were equally lovers of our Souls as *they*? and who should be more the Beloved of our Souls on Earth? When the Apostle Paul look'd on a Convert, he said, *He is my own Bowels*. I leave it then to the *Bowels* of the Convert, to say what mourning the Death of such a Pastor calls for? Or if you desire to see the Sorrowful parting exemplified, read it in the 20. of the *Acts*; where when Paul took leave of the *Elders of the Church in Ephesus*, which was unto them their burying him; and when he had remembered them of his painful and successful Labours among them; *they all wept sore and fell upon his neck and kissed him; sorrowing that they were never again to see his grave and gracious face, nor hear again his pleasant voice, his powerful and illuminating Sermons*.—— Thus the Prophet's Relation to the Souls of men, and their Mission and Labours for their spiritual and everlasting Interests, is a sufficient ground for the greatest sorrow in their Death. For if it be sorrowful to part with a kind Friend to us in the common Concerns of life; is not this Friend of our Souls nearest? Is there nothing in a Spiritual Relation, when we make so much of a Natural one? Was He not thine from God, to minister the bread of life to thy soul; while the father of thy flesh only fed thy body? And has not *Christ* taught us to value a Relation in Grace, even more than one in the flesh only? *Mat. 12. ult. Who is my Mother? and who are my Brethren? He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, he is my Mother and Sister and Brother*. Then remember them that have spoken to you the Word of life, and be sensible of the Rebuke in their death;

death; even as when you are bereaved of a Father and Brother. So resent the hand of God, and so feel his rod.— I will add but one more Reason of the Doctrine, Namely,

3. *THE holy Anger and Displeasure of God, which may be well apprehended in such a Providence, is a just reason for holy fear and sorrow.* Our Text tells us that we must awfully apprehend the Anger and Judgment of God in the death of his Prophets. It is like God's calling home his Ambassadors of peace. Let us think then, what have we done? what offence or provocation have we given? how did we entertain Them and their Messages? are they not gone to give an Account of their poor, or ill reception? what Success had they in their Embassie? and what have they to shew unto the Lord concerning us?— Or again, Is not the Prophet's death as the Extinction of the light? *Mat. 5. 14. Ye are the lights of the World.* What a dark Dispensation then is their death? for truly the light is sweet: *Jo. 5. 35. He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a Season to rejoice in his light.* In the death of such a Minister, we may assume the sorrowful Complaint of David, in his Psalm to bring to remembrance, *Pf. 38. The light of my Eyes that also is gone from me.*— It is awful to think and fear, Is God quenching the light of Israel? and taking away the breath of our Nostrils? his Anointed ones? Are the gracious pledges of his Presence with us lessening? And when he blows out the lights, may we not fear lest he remove the Candlestick too? God grant we never come to that sad Complaint, *Pf. 74. 9. We see not our signs, there is no more any Prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.* IN

IN a word, When *Prophets* die, let the Church fear lest its Defence be departing with the Glory of the Lord. They are the *Chariots of Israel* and the *Horsemen thereof*. As such they are to be mourned, while they ascend from us. We want to have our eyes opened, to see the *Chariots of fire* about them while they live? O will the *Angelic Hosts* go away also with them? and leave us naked and exposed to temporal and Spiritual Enemies? God forbid. Yet we read, and are warned to consider seriously of it, That the *Righteous* are taken away from the Evil to come. So after *Samuel's* death the *Philistines* came formidably on. And *Elisha* died, and the Bands of *Moabites* invaded the Land. And when *Jehojada* died, the Hosts of *Syria* came up. It becomes us to fear the impending Judgments of God, when his *Prophets* are removed from us by death.

FOR these Reasons we ought to be affected with, ought greatly to lay to heart and mourn, when the Lord, the Lord of Hosts takes away his *Prophets* from his people.

USE. I come now to Apply the Doctrine. And
 I. SHOULD we mourn the deaths of faithful Ministers, let us then thank God for a Ministry in his Church; and for the Lamps which he has lighted up and kept burning, in a constant Succession in his Church, from the days of the ancient Prophets down to our times, on whom the Ends of the Earth are come. And we in this Land have had a large share in the Bounty of Heaven; even in the many Excellent Persons both in Church and State, by Whom God has Illuminated a Wilderness; which but a Century past was a Region of
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darkness and the shadow of death. How *many* great and good Men are deceased long since, of whom our *Fathers* have told us? and *Some* our Eyes have seen and blessed, our Ears have heard and given witness unto; as *this Venerable Father* whom we mourn to day. And God has raised up of late years in the Ministry, not a few who inherit much of the Good Spirit of our Fathers deceased, and are like to be Singular Blessings to the Land. We must give glory to God for this, of whose fulness we yet receive. How good was it to see *Eleazer* clothed in his Father's Garments of glory and beauty, before the Parent and *High priest* died? Even our *Mourning*s do but remember us of our *Receipts*; and mind us of the praises which we owe to free Grace, that has first *enrich'd* us, or we could not have been so *Bereaved*.

2. SHOULD we mourn the death of the *Prophets*, Let us learn then to prize the *Schools of the Prophets*, our *Colleges*, and the *Means of Literature and good Education* that are enjoy'd by us. This has been our great Felicity from the beginning of these Colonies; thro' the good Hand of our God upon us, and with our wise and pious *Fathers*. They laid these *Foundations* for us. Where had been the *End* of your Sorrow this day, if there were not these *Supplies* for Church and State, by the will of God. Our *Cambridge* is our *Ramah*; of which we read, that when *Saul's Messengers* came thither, they saw the *Company of Prophets prophesying*, and *Samuel standing appointed over them*. * Thence You of this Church had

* In these *Schools of the Prophets* (says Bishop Bull) men were trained up to *Prophecy by Discipline and Education*. The
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had *Him*, who also for so long a time *Presided* over our *School of the Prophets*. And if there were *Schools* in the Prophet's days, whose *Office* and *Endowments* were *Extraordinary*, from which ordinarily (but not always) God raised up the *Seers to Israel*; How much more are our *Schools* needful to us, in the days that *Prophecies* cease in the Church? *Elijah* and *Elisha*, after *Samuel*, seem to have been the *Heads and Presidents of Israel's Colleges*; and there they were particularly mourn'd for when they died; and cry'd after—— *My father, my father.*

3. DOES God call us to mourn at the death of *Ministers*, *He requires us to be sure then to love and*

Students devoted themselves unto such *Studies and Exercises* as were preparatory for it. And when they had attained it, they still us'd a proportionable diligence for the *Maintenance, preservation and increase of it*. 1 Sam. 10. 10—19. 20. 2 King. 4. 38. Like as the fire from Heaven was kept burning by supplying it with proper fuel.

There the *Sons of the Prophets*, the *Candidates* for the Spirit of Prophecy, were taught the *Scope and Signification* of the *Sacrifices and Ceremonial Laws*, and had explained to them all those things that prefigured the *Messiah*. There they were instructed in the *Prophecies of Scripture*, and by what *Means and Ways* they might obtain the *Gift of Prophecy* and the *Increase of it*.

Yea even the *divinely Inspired Persons* and *Ministers of God* made Use of *Ordinary helps and means*, such as *Books and Reading*, with *Study Meditation and Prayer*, for their *Assistance* in the discharge of their *Office*. So did *Daniel*; See his 9. Chap. 2. v. And so *Timothy* was directed by the *Apostle Paul*, not to neglect; but stir up the *Gift that was in him*; and therefore to give himself to *Reading, Meditation or Study*; yea to give himself wholly to them, that his *profiting might appear to all*.

See Bishop *Bull's Sermons and Discourses*. Vol. 2. from P. 412, to 421.

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honour them, improve and profit by them, while they are continued in their Ministry. Let our Regards to God and his Servants be Uniform and of a piece. Let not Aaron be only murmur'd at while he lives, and wept for when he dies. How do these things hang together? They are certainly to be Esteemed rich Blessings to us while they live, whose Deaths must be bewailed as among our greatest losses. And where the life has not been duly priz'd, the death will never be duly mourn'd. Wherefore Esteem highly in love your living Ministers for their Works sake; accounting them worthy of double honour for their labours in Word and Doctrine. Brethren, pray for 'em, that God would spare 'em, that he would use 'em; that he would direct and comfort 'em, succeed and prosper 'em in his work. Thank God for their prolonged lives, for his Gifts and Graces in them, for his Presence with them and help afforded them, in their Studies for you and Administrations to you, and for all the good which you and others receive by them. Profit by them: Let that appear for their Comfort and encouragement in their work; for then they live if you stand fast in the faith and walk in the truth. Provide decently and honourably for them, that they may give themselves wholly to the Word of God and prayer, and may be able to maintain good Works, and a sober Hospitality. Be ready too to stand up for them and appear on the Lord's side, against despisers and maligners; that they may thank God and take Courage, as Paul did when he saw the friendly faces of the Brethren, and their publick owning him in the Cause of Christ. And finally, Hear and look on your Ministers as dying men,

men, and prepare to part with them, and to meet them again in the day and at the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ. Consider your selves and them together on your way thither; and so hear and do as those that must be judged by the Law of Liberty. The Word which they speak to you, the same shall judge you in the last day. See your Duty, Heb. 13. 7, 17. Remember them which have (and who have had) the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation: Obey them that have the rule over you and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls as those that must give an account, that they may do it with Joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable unto you.

4. DOES God take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the Prophet as well as others, It is a word of Awakning and Quickning unto Ministers. It is not their Office, their relation to God, their delight and fidelity in his work, their love to Souls and care for their Salvation; it is not their usefulness, the love of their people nor their prayers, that can protect them from death. All these do only help together to prepare for a happy Death, and a blessed Eternity. We ought to preach (and O that we could) as dying Men and unto dying bearers; and how happy would it be to us all if we did so speak and so bear. Our Lord's words should be always sounding in our ears, Jo. 9. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work.

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LET us desire to *propheſie*, and covet ſpiritual Gifts, that we may edify *Souls*, and glorify *Chriſt*. Let us Emulate the Graces of the holy Prophets, their Faith and Patience, Labours and Diligence; Zeal, Courage and Conſtancy; their Light and Integrity, their Illumination and Influence from above. *Jam. 5. 10. Take my Brethren, the Prophets, who have ſpoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example.* Let us, like thoſe Holy Men of God, be much in *prayers and praiſes*; for when do you ever read of a Company of Prophets, but they had their *Pſalteries* † and *Tabrets* and *Harps* in their hands;

† The Learned tell us, "That accuracy of mind, and a kind of natural Sublimeneſs and Exaltneſs of Thought and Judging, was a Preparation of *Moses* and *Iſaiah* and *Daniel* for the Prophetick Spirit that reſted on them." But this was as it pleaſed the God of our Spirits to form them; who alſo dignified Souls of leſſer Endowments with the Spirit of Prophecy. Some of the Prophets were more Eminent than others. Num. 12. 7.

Some have idly tho't, that *Melancholly* was a meet and neceſſary Diſpoſition of mind in a Prophet; but certainly the joyful and glad heart was as meet for the Influence and Impulſe of the Holy Spirit, as the ſad and heavy. As he ſanctifies either, ſo he uſes them both as it pleaſes him; and either might become a Prophet. Nothing light and vain could; but ſober and holy mirth belong'd to them (would the world have permitted it) rather than unto any men. Divine Joys accompanied the Revelations of God to them. But the Sins of men made them more men of ſorrows than others. So the Lord of the Prophets was of all men the moſt acquainted with grief.

Indeed the Jews had a Proverb, "That the Prophetick Spirit did not reſt upon a ſad mind. This was doubtleſs a wrong Maxim in one Extream. *Spinola* and others like him have gone into the other, and have repreſented the Prophets as Hypochondriack perſons. A moſt profane and ſcurrilous Abufe of them, and of Him that inſpir'd 'em. Certainly they led the

hands; that is to say, their *hearts* raised and their *mouaths* opened in the Worship and praises of God. And may we be Inspired of God like them with ardent Love, and tender Compassion to the *Souls*, *Souls of men*; willingly to spend our strength, and sacrifice our lives for their Salvation. And then *tho' Israel be not gathered*, yet (like *Christ* the great Prophet, our Lord and Master) *we shall be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord*, and our God shall be our strength.

5. And lastly, **SHOULD** we be deeply affected with the hand of God in the death of *Eminent and Faithful Ministers*, and lay the Providence to heart; Then *You of this Congregation* ought to mourn this day, and the *Ministers and People of the Town and Land* ought to mourn with you, the Death of your late *Aged and Venerable Pastor*.— I count not my self *worthy* nor able to speak of so *Great and Good a Man*, nor to *You* upon this Occasion. Yet if I should altogether be *silent* it might be justly censurable, and if I presume to *speak* my Words will fall below his praises which are in all the Churches. Modesty forbids me to attempt his *Character*, but *Reverence* commands me to pay some *Tribute* to his Memory, and *Love* constrains me to mourn with you in Your Bereavement.

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the most gladsome life in the world, so far as the state of the Church, and the Sins and Sufferings of *Israel* would permit them.

But truly neither Sadness nor Chearfulness in a Prophet will pass without the Censure and Reproach of a wicked world. *Matth. 11. 18, 19 Psalm 69. 10. 2 Sam. 6. 20.*

See the Learned *Wissus*, *De Prophetia et Prophetia.*

MR Brethren, We are all bereaved with You this Day : For this Aged Saint was a Father to us all ; to the whole Ministry, to all the Churches, and to his Country.

HE was the Patriarch and Prophet among us, if any one might be so called : A holy Man, and a Man of God, holding fast the faithful Word, and holding forth the word of life. He had read and search'd as far into the Prophecies of Scripture as most Divines, and had form'd it may be as many just and clear Conceptions of, and Conclusions from those abstruse and mysterious Revelations of God, as most have done before him. The Prophets of old were sober, grave, wise, virtuous, tho'tful, solid and judicious Men ; as well as devout and gracious ; delighting in retirement, study, contemplation, and secret communion with Heaven. In these respects truly the signs of a Prophet of God were upon him. He had also the courage, zeal and boldness of a Prophet in what he judged and esteem'd to be the Cause of God, his Truth, his Worship, and his Holiness.

HE was sanctified from his Youth, an early Convert, from his fourteenth year ; and he was early called to minister before the Lord for the Conversion of others. He walk'd with God, and serv'd him in the work of the Ministry to the Eighty fifth year of his Age. Seventy years He liv'd to God, and more than Sixty of those seventy he was a laborious Preacher of Christ.

A most excellent Preacher he was, using great plainness of speech, with much light and heat, force and power ; for he taught as one having Authority,

ity, commanding Reverence from all that heard him; while he spake (as becomes the Oracles of God) with the most awful Reverence himself.

HE was very happy in his *Method*, which was always distinct and perspicuous, and laid the Doctrines of Godliness in the clearest light, to the easiest perception of the weakest Capacity. At the same time there was a vein of *Learning* and *Argument* running thro' these labour'd and plain Discourses, which was a sufficient Entertainment for the strongest and most curious (but serious) Mind.

HE lov'd his *Study* to a kind of excess, and in a manner *liv'd* in it from his Youth to a great Old Age; where he gave himself to *Reading* and *Doctrine*; for he especially studied his *Bible* and was mighty in the *Scriptures*; with which he begun and ended, while for sixty years together he made himself Master of all the Learning of past Ages, or that was passing in his own times; that was needful to furnish out an Accomplish'd *Divine*.

AS the Sacred Study was his Element, So his Excellency was in the *Pulpit*, and God gave his Ministrations an abundant *Success* as well as *Acceptance*. I trust there are many *living* Instances and Witnesses of what I now say here present, and there are many more elsewhere and already in *heaven*, who have been converted to God by his Ministry. It was a *Soul-searching Ministry*; and it is sad for such as have sat under it and have not found the saving Good of it. I might use

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here Dr. *Bates* his Words in his Funeral Sermon on Mr. *Baxter*, and say to You of Your *Deceased Pastor*, "that he was Animated with the Holy Spirit, and breathed Celestial fire, to inspire heat and life into dead Sinners.

AGAIN let me put you in mind of the awful and reverend manner wherein he led you in the public *Addresses* to God. His *face* as well as *words* were eno^d to teach and constrain devotion; could Example or the power of words do it. But that is not to be communicated nor breathed into others, but by the *blessed Spirit of Grace* himself.

BUT the first and last Subject and Object of all his *Sermons* and *Prayers* among you, was *Jesus Christ* and him crucified. This only he desired to know among you. With this He *began* and with this he *ended* his Ministry. He preach'd Him in his Person, Offices, Benefits. He lov'd to preach his Righteousness and his Glory in the great Congregation: He *refrained not his lips*, O Lord thou knowest. He *saw* much of his Glory, and spake often of it, with great pleasure and delight. He preached Faith in Him, Union to Him, and Salvation by Him. *Christ* was in him the hope of Glory. Herein he was *more than a Prophet*; the least Preacher of Christ Crucified and Glorified being herein greater than *John*, who only prepar'd his way before him*.

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* Not but that the *Prophets* of old spake and wrote abundantly of *Christ*, His *Person*, *Life*, *Offices*, *Sufferings*, *Benefits*

BUT what is much more than barely to *preach Christ Jesus the Lord*, your Excellent Pastor liv'd here in the flesh by the faith in him, in a holy Conformity to his blessed Life and Law. His Law was within him, and the life of Jesus was manifested in his mortal flesh. He liv'd unto Christ, devoted to his glory and spent in his Service; Christ lived in him, and to him to live was Christ. You are Witnesses and God also, how holily he has gone before you, walking with God till God took him; being an Example to the flock, in all holy Conversation and Godliness. We may now say to you concerning him, *Be ye followers of Him as He was of Christ, and walk so as ye had him for an Example.*—I mean not this of every step of life, for in many things we all offend; but only as to the general Course, and the End of his Conversation.

I will not speak of the various and more extensive Services unto which it pleased God to call his Servant, in his Agency at London, and in his Presidency over the College; These were things beside the Ministry of the Lord Jesus, which he found Grace so well to fulfil; and tho' they render'd him more the Father of his Country, and a Father to the standing Ministry

fits and Glory. See Act. 3. 21, 24. 10. 43. Heb. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, 12.

"The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy. Rev. 19. 10.
"The Prophetick Spirit from the beginning of the World was a Witness of Christ; not one Prophet excepted. There has not been a Signal Prophecy since the foundation of the World, but there was something of Christ in it."

See Mr. Charnock, Vol. 2. pag. 181.

Ministry in our Churches; yet they are not so much his praise in our religious and worshipping Assemblies. It is the Christian and the Minister, the Scholar and the Doctor that we here regard.

BUT the singular favour of God unto his Servant was that unto old age God carried him, and a very fruitful and serviceable old age God honoured him with; so that after his Eightieth Year you have enjoy'd his Labours, and heard him preach with vigour and strength both of mind and body. God herein answered Mr. Baxter's dying prayer for your Pastor; who when Mr. Mather took leave of him on his death-bed, pray'd for him that the Lord would prolong his life. And God has prolong'd his life unto this Month. God has fulfilled to him that promise, Ps. 92. 13, 14. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the Courts of our God: they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no Unrighteousness in him.

GREAT has been the favour and mercy of God to this Flock, and to the Family of his Servant, that He has been thus long spared to You. For many years you have seen and heard his earnest Desires to go from you, by the will of God, into his Everlasting Rest. That Desire is now come, and it is the tree of life to him, in the midst of the Paradise of God. While the Hope was deferred it made his heart sick. He often told you from this Desk, in the most solemn and affecting manner, of his Desires to depart. You often saw his

Peace

Peace and Joy and the full Assurance of his Faith.— But the Holy God had a Year of Trial and sore Exercise for his Servant yet to live thro'. *Patience must have its perfect Work*, as well as Faith, in his way to the Promises. He went thro' unknown *dolours* and pains for many months; but metho't his Grace never seem'd brighter than in those hours of darkness. For what greater Trial or Exercise or Display of Grace is there, than *in following hard after God in the dark*? How would it blaze out again and again, while he repeated those words, *Jo. 12. 26. Where I am, there shall my Servant be.* "Christ is in heaven, (would he say, with strong crying and tears) and I shall be with him there.

AND according to his Faith it is unto Him. No doubt he *sleeps in Jesus*, and *sees his Glory*, and shall come with him.

AND now, as Dr. Bates concludes his Funeral Sermon on Mr. Baxter,—"Blessed be the
"Gracious God that he was pleas'd to prolong
"the Life of his Servant, so useful and beneficial
"to the World, to a full age; and that he has
"bro't him slowly and safely to heaven. May we
"live the short remainder of our lives, as entire-
"ly to the Glory of God as he lived; and may
"we live and die in the like blessed Peace that
"he did: that we may be with him in the King-
"dom of light and love for ever.

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“Sermon on Mr. Bate concludes his Funeral
AND now, as Dr. Bate concludes his Funeral

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“will come with him.”
“No longer he is Jesus, and in his Glory, and
AND according to his Faith it is unto him.

“rying and tears) and I shall be with him there.”
“Christians in heaven (would believe) with things
“75. and I am, that I am, say, say, say, say, say
“again and again, while he repeated these words,
“after God in the dark? How would it please our
“or Display of Grace is there, than in following him
“of darkness. For when greater Light or darkness
“his Grace never seemed brighter than in those hours
“known and pain, for many months; but, whether
“way to the promise. He went thro’ unknown
“may have his path there, as well as I have, in his
“Exerts for his servant yet to live thro’? I have
“But the Holy God had a Law of Love and Love
“Love and Joy and the full display of his Faith.”